

# Reply to “A Brain Drain due to Increased Regulation of Influenza Virus Research Is Highly Speculative”

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We appreciate the perspective provided by Dr. Culp in describing the acceptance by scientists of the highly regulated environment for classified physics research (1). We agree that as more microbiology research falls into the category of “dual-use research of concern” or DURC, it is important to consider the experience in fields such as physics, whose members had to learn how to deal and work with these challenges. Dr. Culp’s perspective is welcomed and important for the ongoing debate. However, we argue that in the present, the influenza research community is largely university and research institute based and therefore that the comparison to the restrictive environment accepted by the physics community is not a relevant comparison. Much of the influenza research work is currently being done by graduate students and postdoctoral fellows who need to complete their projects to receive their doctoral degrees and obtain jobs. For these individuals, interruptions of research work by moratoriums and increased regulation cannot be a welcomed state of affairs. Although we do not have any data at this time to support our belief that increased regulations in influenza research will drive some young scientists to look for less-restrictive pastures, it is reasonable to suspect that changes that affect their work environment will have some effect on career choices. Established investigators may remain in the field despite increased regulation simply be-

cause established scientists have generally very little mobility between fields (2). However, the situation for young bright minds with choice between selecting a highly regulated field and an unencumbered academic field is very different. Hence, we believe that the concerns expressed in our editorial remain valid (3).

## REFERENCES

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